

News from Ed Markey

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

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Markey, Black Caucus Alarmed by Disproportionate Prevalence of Alzheimer's Among African-Americans

WASHINGTON, D.C. --

Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) co-chair of the Bipartisan Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease today joined with the Congressional Black Caucus and the Alzheimer's Association to release an Association Report revealing that Alzheimer's Disease is 14%-100% more prevalent among African Americans than among white Americans.

Markey stated: "I used to say that Alzheimer's disease was an equal opportunity illness, but today's Alzheimer's Association report highlights that African Americans are more likely to fall victim to Alzheimer's than white Americans. However, Alzheimer's continues to be indiscriminate in its cruelty - whether black, or white, Republican or Democrat Alzheimer's is an equally devastating illness to one and all. Today's Association report provides a call to action for us all to join forces -the 38 Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, the 158 Members of the Alzheimer's Task Force, the 4 million Americans suffering from Alzheimer's along with the countless at-home caregivers --- today let us all join together to fight the epidemic that plagues our country and win the battle over Alzheimer's Disease before it affects over 14 million Americans by 2050.

"Additionally troubling evidence in this report indicates that African Americans are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage of Alzheimer's disease - which limits the effectiveness of treatments requiring early intervention. Given this data, I am eager to begin work on an initiative with Rep. Johnson and the CBC to raise awareness of these issues in Congress and build an educational campaign targeted at minorities to increase awareness of Alzheimer's disease.

"In addition, we must band together to urge Congress and this Administration to increase federal funding for promising Alzheimer's research and to include communities in this research which have historically been excluded. Last year, the Alzheimer's Task Force, along with the Alzheimer's Association set a goal of reaching \$1 Billion in federal research funding by 2003. Together we must continue to urge Congress and this Administration devote the necessary dollars to combat this disease sooner than later.

"Working together we can do more -- and we must. So that one day children will have to look to the history books to learn about the epidemic that plagued the early part of the 21st Century. An epidemic caused by an illness that was ultimately cured."

Markey co-founded the Alzheimer's Task Force with Chris Smith (R-NJ) in 1999 to raise awareness of Alzheimer's Disease in Congress, create initiatives to improve the lives of those affected by Alzheimer's and increase federal funding for Alzheimer's research. Markey has been the sponsor of several Alzheimer's initiatives which have become law. For further information please visit

<http://www.house.gov/markey/>

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